

An Australian Perspective on Rhododendron Conservation



Three gardens which are affiliated with Australian Rhododendron Society

- National Rhododendron Garden ,Olinda, Vic.
- Emu valley Rhododendron Garden, Burnie, Tas.
- Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, Adelaide Hills ,
SA.

Other gardens Non affiliated

- Campbell Memorial garden in Blackheath NSW has focussed mainly on cultivar Rhododendrons and Azaleas. It does have what they call their “Species Valley” dating back to the 1970’s, Local government restrictions due to Water catchment issues have restricted this from further development
- Mt Tomah Botanic garden part of the RBG Sydney organisation has in the vicinity of 200 species.

- A coordinated approach to the degree that knowledge of what material is in each location is shared as well as material from each is donated each way with no qualification or restriction

National Rhododendron Garden Olinda

- NRG Olinda was the first garden developed specifically for Rhododendrons by members of the Australian Rhododendron society in 1960.
- Management of the garden is now in the hands of Parks Victoria. Plants are sourced by Volunteers from the Australian Rhododendron society. This is either by seed imported from Rhododendron Species Foundation, American Rhododendron society or RHS seed lists, collected by members, or from pollination of known parent within the garden and vegetative re-propagation of plants within the garden and donated cutting material.
- Data is currently under review and exact totals of species unknown at this stage however there has been an analysis of Redlisted species



















Three views of proposed new species
Conservation collection land area

Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden

- Emu valley Rhododendron garden was begun by the then Northern Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron garden in 1981
- Material for the species collection is mainly from imported seed in a similar fashion to NRG Olinda and re-propagation from known sourced material
- Current number of species is 440 in total





**Maurie Kupsch EVRG Curator (hon)and
Jacinta Woods EVRG horticulturist**

All other staffing is by volunteers.

The garden is owned solely and operated by these volunteers and one full time employee



emuvalleyrhodo.com.au

11 Hectares in size and has 22000 plants

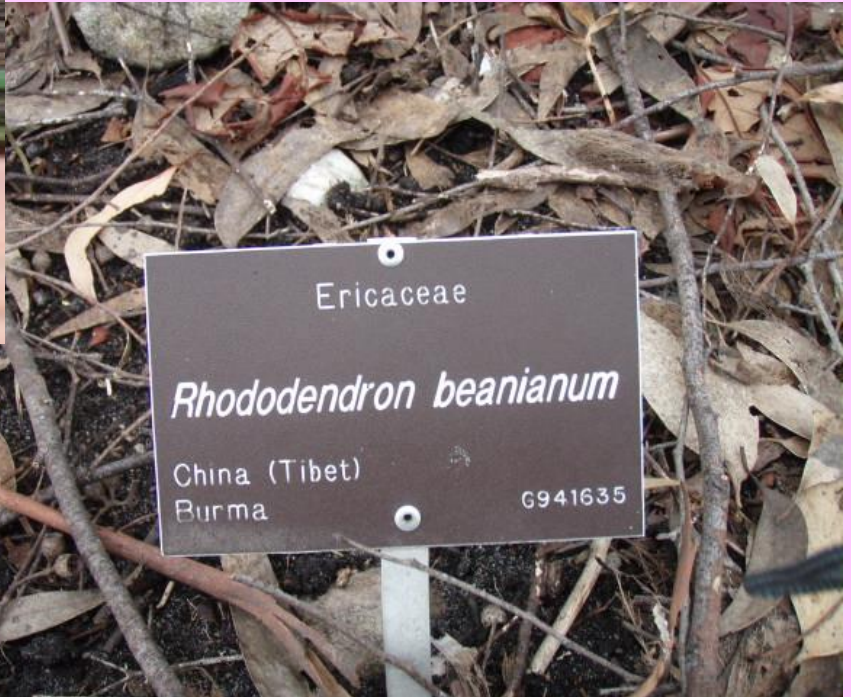
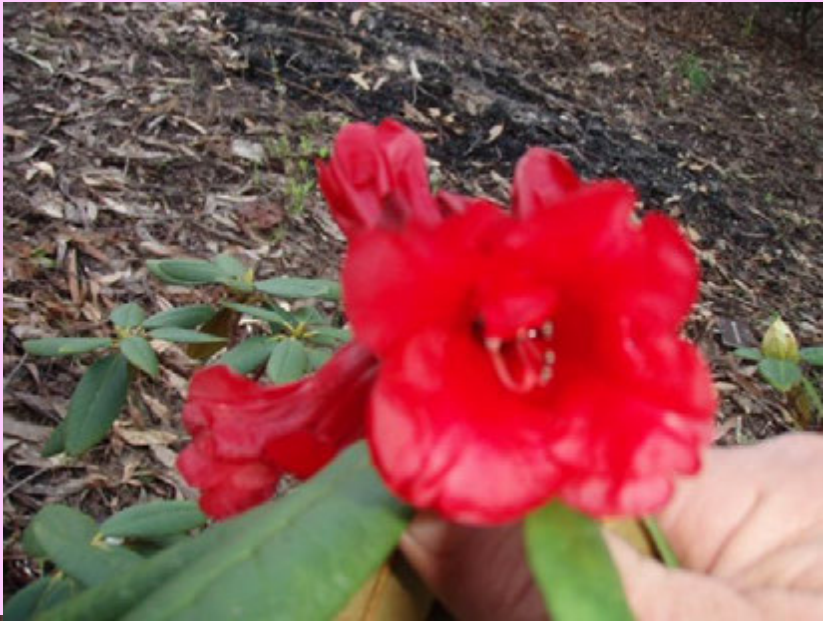
440 species Rhododendrons as well as a large number of locally bred and other hybrids

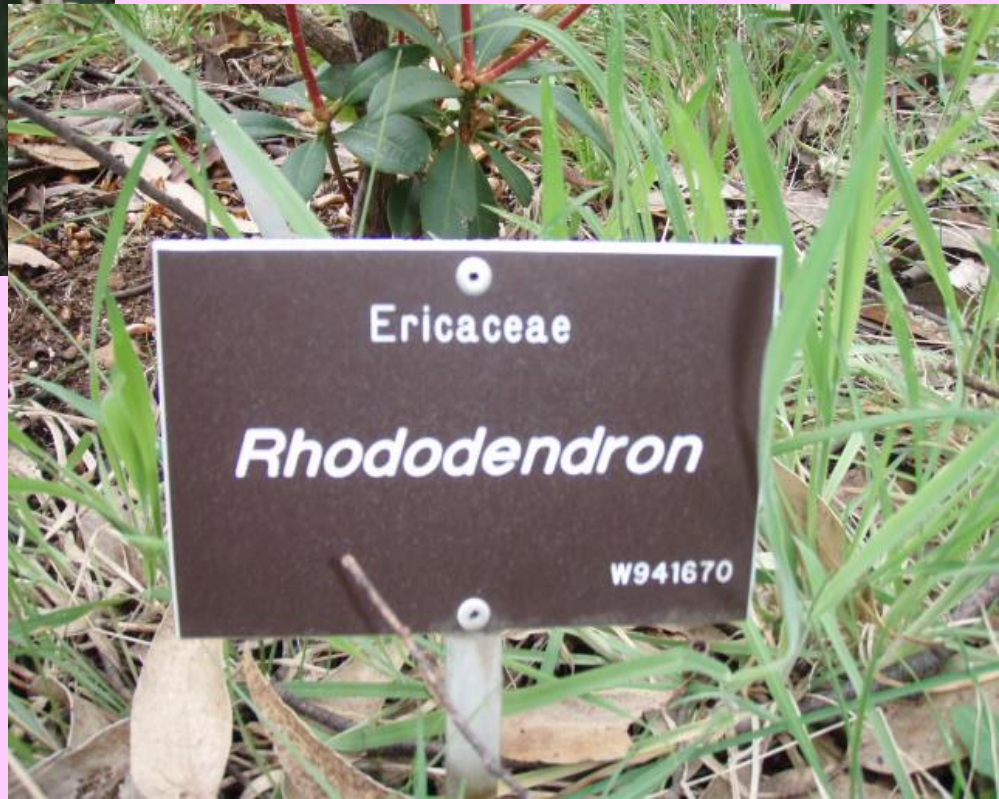
Mt Lofty Botanic Garden

- Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, part of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide began in 1952 and was opened to public in 1977
- Species Rhododendrons were not a focus collection until after the devastating 1983 Ash Wednesday Bushfires
- Donations from both NRG Olinda and EVRG helped restore the gardens' Rhododendron collection
- Species sourced from seed from a variety of sources such as Sikkim Forest Commission Taiwan Forestry Commission and Kunming Institute for Botanical science
- Current number of species 180











Actions taken in response to IUCN BGCI Red List

- IUCN BGCI Redlist of Rhododendrons has stimulated discussion within the Australian Rhododendron society as well as the institutions they are affiliated with.
- NRG Olinda and MLBG have done an assessment of redlisted species in collection
- Recent Living collections policy review of the Rhododendron collection by the BGA at MLBG has used the redlist to prioritise species to grow that suit our conditions
- Australian Rhododendron Society Executive has made collection of new material of Australian Rhododendron species a current project

ARS process for *Rhododendron lochiaie* and *viriosium* collection

- Application for collection permit to the relevant Queensland government authority was made but not successful
- This made our initial Field expedition a locate and log condition in the wild of three known and one possible locale of the species
- The four locations were Mt Lewis, Mt Bartle Frere, Bell Peak and Mt Finnigan in Far Nth Qld













- Currently we have a revised permit application being examined by Queensland authorities

- The plan is to collect material to have ex situ conservation collections of the Australian *Rhododendron* species *R. lochiaie* and *R. viriosum* in all three gardens of known wild origin and strong provenance data

- All the gardens mentioned will have the opportunity to share the material collected
- This will ensure there is backup in case of bushfires, droughts and other climate related issues

